

Since its inception in 2003, the week held from May 1–May 7, recognizes the plight of one of the greatest threats to our Nation—46 million Americans who lack health insurance coverage.

This important initiative is led by former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. During the week, community-based events are organized throughout the Nation to heighten public awareness about the importance of making health care coverage a civil right and a priority on our public policy agenda. Over the past three years, the week of events has included health fairs, seminars for small businesses, as well as faith-based, college and university activities.

Mr. Speaker, 46 million Americans—which equates to 15 percent of the population—are living without any form of health insurance coverage. As a Nation that embodies democracy and spreads its principles of equality throughout the world, we should be shocked by this astounding figure. The statistics regarding the uninsured are equally shocking:

Proportionately, Hispanics and African-Americans have been hit the hardest by our failure to provide health care for all. At least 60 percent of Hispanic Americans, more than 43 percent of African Americans, and 23 percent of Caucasians are among the uninsured.

More than one in four uninsured adults (or 26.6 percent) have less than a high school education.

Only 9 percent of people in families with income over \$50,000 per year are uninsured, compared to 40.8 percent of people with family income below \$5,000.

A national survey conducted in 2003 found that almost six in 10 uninsured adults (59 percent) have been without health insurance for two years or more.

In the state of Maryland, approximately 810,000 people, 14.6 percent of the total population, lack health insurance coverage.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics illustrate something very concrete and clear: the human consequences of having tens of millions of Americans uninsured are appalling. Necessary medical treatment is being delayed too long or altogether, and the Americans are dying unnecessarily.

Apart from this fact, the employment-based health insurance system, which provides health insurance for almost two-thirds of the non-elderly population, is also broken.

The reasons are complex, but this much is clear.

Too many Americans are working at low-paid or part-time jobs that do not provide health insurance coverage.

Insurance costs are increasing—and those employers who do offer coverage are attempting to shift more and more of those costs onto their employees.

We also know that those areas of our economy in which any job growth is occurring are about 10 percent less likely to provide health care coverage than those in which the number of available jobs is shrinking.

Mr. Speaker, based on all of these facts, the time to change our Nation's healthcare equation is upon us. There has to be a better way to ensure universal, high quality care. I am convinced that there is no human right more fundamental than the preservation of life. Wealth should not be a pre-condition to world class health care in a nation that truly values all of its people.

With that said, I have joined Michigan Congressman JOHN CONYERS and many others in proposing the United States National Health Insurance Act (H.R. 676).

This proposal would create a nation-wide, single-payer health care system that is publicly financed but provides private care. It would include expanding and improving the existing Medicare program to cover Americans of all ages. Under the plan, Americans would retain (or regain) the right to choose their own doctors. Other health care professionals and all medically necessary services would be covered. There would also be neither co-pays nor deductibles.

Today, I encourage my colleagues to work with us in advancing the vision of universal health care for the following three reasons:

We must not allow the sick and dying Americans in our communities to be marginalized.

We must make common cause with all of the Americans to provide the care that they need at a cost that they can afford.

We must be clear in our assertion that health care is a fundamental human right whatever may be the color of a person's skin.

Now is the time to create a health care system that truly serves ALL Americans and now is the time for America to transform our human right to health care into a civil right guaranteed—and funded—by federal law. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 676.

NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE OF FLORIDA LAND SALE

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced common sense legislation that provides the Forestry Service the flexibility they need to properly manage their assets. This legislation modifies the Florida National Forest Land Management Act in two simple ways, which will provide the Forest Service essential authority to manage the National Forests in Florida effectively.

The first provision simply adds an unmanageable tract of land located in Tallahassee, FL to the list of lands the Secretary of Agriculture is currently authorized to sell. This specific property, tract W-1979, is approximately 114 acres of land that has evolved into an unmanageable problem area for the Apalachicola National Forest. Due to the configuration and surrounding development, the vegetation cannot be managed through prescribed fire. Although a very valuable tract from a real estate/commercial aspect, this tract has lost its National Forest character. The sale of this land will allow the Forest Service to purchase other lands located within the Forest that are more manageable and will enhance National Forests in Florida.

Secondly, this legislation would allow the Forest Service to use proceeds from the sale of other "non-green land" to be used for construction and improvements to Administrative facilities essential to the proper management of the Forest. These "non-green land" tracts of land are owned by the Forest Service, but have urban improvements like fairgrounds or sporting complexes and are not conducive to the overall purpose of protecting our National Forests.

This legislation would allow the Service to use the proceeds from the sale of improved lands to build critical infrastructure they need to manage the Forests in Florida, while allowing the Forest Service to continue its practice of using receipts from all nondeveloped "green land" tracts for the acquisition of other "green land" tracts to enhance the National Forests in Florida. By passing this legislation, the Forest Service will have the ability to efficiently and effectively manage our Nation's precious resources.

CONGRATULATING CHIEF MASTER
SERGEANT JEFFERY D. GUSTAFSON

HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate CMSgt Jeffery D. Gustafson of Rochester, Minnesota, on his dedicated service in the United States Air Force.

In November of 1975, Chief Master Sergeant Gustafson enlisted in the United States Air Force at the 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Force Reserve Station in Minnesota. He retired from the same station on April 1, 2006, having achieved the highest attainable enlisted rank in the United States Military.

Chief Master Sergeant Gustafson has served the United States from across the world, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Honduras. He was given the distinct honor of being the first troop commander of a fully manned Aerospace Expeditionary Force for the United States Air Force. He was also the first recipient of the General Rawlings Air Force Sergeant Association and Air Force Association Chapter's Chief Master Sergeant of the Year. In addition, Chief Master Sergeant Gustafson has been thanked in person for his military service by President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my sincere gratitude to CMSgt Jeffery D. Gustafson for his service in the United States Air Force and his commitment to our nation. His distinguished accomplishments reflect to the highest degree upon himself and the United States Air Force.

AMTRAK 35TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Amtrak on its 35th Anniversary, and commemorate its 35 years of public service to this Nation through its commitment to passenger rail.

I travel all over the country and the people I talk to love Amtrak. It is a great way to commute to work, it takes cars off our already congested highways, and in many areas of the country is the only mode of transportation available. In fact, ridership has increased in 8 of the last 9 years reaching a record level of over 25 million passengers last year. It is also important to note that Amtrak's long distance

trains are the only inner city passenger trains in half the states in America.

Amtrak was also a First Responder during hurricane Katrina, and helped evacuate thousands of Gulf region residents while President Bush and his Administration were nowhere to be found. Now they are becoming a key part in each State's future evacuation plans.

Now what I can't understand is why the Bush Administration is trying to destroy passenger rail in this country. Every industrialized country in the world is investing heavily in rail infrastructure because they realize that this is the future of transportation. But sadly, as there systems get bigger and better, our system gets less and less money.

President Bush has a lot of wacky ideas for dealing with the high gas prices he created, but I can assure him that as prices climb to \$4 dollars per gallon, you are going to see Americans lining up to use a passenger rail system that has been neglected by this very Administration. But what more do you expect when you put J.R. Ewing in the White House.

Once again we see the Bush Administration's paying for its failed policies by cutting funds to vital public services and jeopardizing more American jobs. This Administration sees nothing wrong with taking money from the hard working Amtrak employees who work day and night to provide top quality service to their passengers. These folks are trying to make a living for their families, and they don't deserve this shabby treatment from the President.

With the passage of the latest emergency funding for the war, President Bush will have spent over \$439 billion on the war in Iraq, but could only find \$900 million for Amtrak's 25 million passengers. Just one week's investment in Iraq would significantly improve passenger rail for the entire country for an entire year. This is another perfect example of just how out of touch this Administration is because I can assure the President that there is a whole lot more support for Amtrak in this country than there is for the war in Iraq.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation spread about Amtrak, and it is important for people to know the real facts about Amtrak. Ridership numbers are at record levels, outstanding debt has been reduced by \$300 million, major infrastructure projects have been completed. All with a workforce that has been reduced by over 4,000 employees.

We still have a lot of work ahead of us when it comes to Amtrak. But we're starting \$900 million closer to our goal, and I know with the help of the American public, we can fully fund Amtrak at \$1.6 billion and keep Amtrak running long into the future.

REMEMBERING FRIEDA FRY

HON. SHERROD BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, March 8, 2006, marked the death of Frieda M. Fry, age 94, an honored resident of my district. Her passing prompts me to remark on this remarkable woman, and how she exemplifies qualities that we should encourage in all of our citizens.

A lifelong citizen of Summit County, and 50 year resident of Richfield Township, Frieda

was wife of Federal Administrative Law Judge Walter Logan Fry, who preceded her in death in 1978. Judge Fry served long and well in federal service, culminating with his appointment to the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, DHEW, including 3 years as ALJ in charge of the Cleveland, Ohio, Office.

Frieda was born in Barberton, Ohio, and traces her roots to the Swiss and German settlers of the early eighteenth century. She graduated from Akron East High School in 1929; and received the Diploma for Elementary Teaching from Kent State College (now University) in 1931.

From 1931 to 1935, she taught Fourth Grade at the Betty Jane School in Akron. Beginning in 1941, she taught elementary grades for the Boston Rural School District in Peninsula. Beginning in 1962, she taught elementary grades at Hillcrest Elementary School in Richfield, Ohio.

Mrs. Fry's interest in learning began early. Son, W. Logan Fry, recounts: "mother told us that when she was a little girl, she would spend half her allowance on lunch—and the other half on books. Books opened the whole world to her. At her death, her personal library included books on art, science, religion, medicine, psychology, nature, history and the cultures of the world."

Following Judge Fry's death in 1978, Mrs. Fry traveled five continents. She traveled across China; visited small textile factories in India; rode on the backs of elephants in Kashmir; and experienced the smells of the opium dens of Katmandu. On this later trip, a very finely dressed gentleman with a well-trimmed mustache, who described himself as a diplomat, asked if she had any daughters—and volunteered to care for them generously if she did. Mrs. Fry politely declined, but continued in a mutually rewarding conversation.

In Russia, she attended a performance of the Moscow Ballet on a wintry Christmas Eve; and enjoyed the circus in Uzbekistan. The jet flight to Tashkent, with goats and chickens on the passenger list, was a harrowing but thrilling experience.

Frieda made many trips to Germany and Switzerland. On one such trip, with daughter Nancy Fry Laessig, two German citizens on a facing train car seat said, in their native language: "Look at those two Americans, they don't even know the difference between the Danube and the Rhine." Nancy translated, and Mrs. Fry shot back: "We are guests in your country, you should be telling us all about your country, not disparaging your guests." That led to a deeper conversation, and her German critics soon became friends, sharing ideas and experiences until their train arrived in Zurich.

Mrs. Fry also traveled in and across Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Germany, France, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand, among others.

Moreover, as part of Richfield's "Mundialization" program, she entertained friends from Wolfach, Germany; and visited them in their own homes in Wolfach. (In the 1960s, Richfield, Ohio became America's first 'world town,' followed by Minneapolis, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Boston, among others.)

Frieda Fry placed her beacon atop of her basket; and has served as an example for two generations of her own children. Grandson Michael Fry who competed for the United States

in Amateur Rope Skipping Competitions in Korea, Australia, Belgium and Canada; granddaughter Bonnie Laessig who traveled across Norway with her paternal grandfather, artist Robert Laessig; granddaughter Holly Laessig who studied language and culture in Bangkok, Thailand; granddaughter Rachel Mitton Fry who studied language in Tel Aviv and biochemistry in Munich; and granddaughter Elizabeth Anne Fry who studied Russian in Moscow, built homes in South Africa with President Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity and, last year, taught elementary students in Tanzania.

The qualities that Frieda M. Fry demonstrated in her daily life are well suited for all Americans—the delight in learning, the calling to teach and spread knowledge, and the engagement with the people with whom we share our planet. For her, 9/11 was not a call to isolation and retreat, and certainly not an excuse to erect rigid barriers designed to bar students, artists, immigrants and refugees from our shores.

Frieda Fry embraced the people of the world, and their diverse cultures.

We will all miss her.

RESPONSE TO 2006 USTR SPECIAL 301 REPORT

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, last week the USTR issued its annual Special 301 report evaluating intellectual property laws in foreign countries. During this year's review process, I wrote to Ambassador Portman along with a bipartisan group of my colleagues raising concern about the agency's consideration of complaints by the pharmaceutical industry against Israel. PhRMA had called on USTR to elevate Israel to the worst designation of "Priority Foreign Country" and work to block Israel's membership in the OECD because of pharmaceutical IP issues.

I am glad to see that the USTR chose not to take these drastic steps. Such action would have been unwarranted and damaging to an important ally. However, I am deeply disappointed that Israel did remain on the "Priority Watch List." Israel has worked in steadfast consultation with the U.S. to adopt broader protections for pharmaceutical products. Israeli lawmakers, under the leadership of then-Minister of Trade Ehud Olmert, passed legislation that strikes a balance between the need to provide strong protections for innovators and timely access to affordable treatment for the Israeli public.

Similar to a U.S. law, commonly referred to as Hatch-Waxman, the Israeli system provides patent extensions for delays in the drug approval process as well as 5 years of exclusive marketing rights for new drugs that enter the market. This is far beyond the level of protection required by the World Trade Organization agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS). Yet, by keeping Israel on the "Priority Watch List," the Special 301 report criticizes Israel just as harshly as major IP offenders like China and Russia, and more harshly than many other countries with weaker IP regimes.